



# Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

## INSIDE

### Statement of Donald E. Booth U.S. Ambassador-designate to Ethiopia before the Senate

Ambassador Donald Booth testified before the United States' Senate Committee on Foreign Relations regarding his appointment by President Obama to be the next United States Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

The following is Ambassador Booth's statement to the Committee:



Ambassador Donald Booth.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the Senate Foreign Relations

Committee;

It is an honor to appear

before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. I greatly appreciate the trust and confidence the President and Secretary Clinton have placed in me. I am also grateful for the steadfast support of my wife Anita, a retired Foreign Service Officer who is in Zambia, where I have had the honor of serving as ambassador

(Continued on page 2)

### Remarks of María Otero to Organization of African First Ladies Against HIV/AIDS

Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs, María Otero, on February 1, 2010 delivered opening remarks to the meeting of the Organization of African First Ladies Against HIV/AIDS (OAFLA) held on the margins of the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa.

In addition to commending their collective leadership in the fight against HIV/AIDS, Under Secretary Otero encouraged



Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs María Otero.

the assembled First Ladies to leverage their leadership positions also to tackle the challenge of human trafficking – particularly of women and girls.

(Begin remarks)

Thank you to the Organization of African First Ladies for inviting me to be here with you today.

It is an honor to be with

(Continued on page 2)

#### AFRICAN NEWS

Sudan Tops Foreign Policy Concerns in Obama YouTube Appearance (P 3)

Contact Group on Piracy off Somalia Marks First Anniversary (P 4)

MCC Chief Executive to Visit Ghana and Cape Verde (P 5)

Western Nations Urge Nigeria to Exercise Restraint (P 6)

#### PEACE & SECURITY

America Must Lead Through Engagement, Obama Says (P 7)

Byliner: Vice President Biden on Obama's Nuclear Vision (P 8)

#### AMERICAN NEWS

State of the Union Address Deeply Rooted in American History (P 10)

Obama Prepares to Submit U.S. Budget for Fiscal Year 2011 (P 11)

2010 Census Spurs Muslim-American Community Groups to Action (P 13)

Museum Seeks to Document the African-American Experience (P 14)

Black History Month Honors Legacy of Struggle and Triumph (P 16)

#### DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

United States Condemns "Unjust" Executions of Iranian Dissenters (P 18)

U.S. Intensifies Efforts to Prevent Human Trafficking in Haiti (P 19)

The Struggle for Internet Freedom (P 20)

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## Statement of Donald E. Booth U.S. Ambassador-designate . . .

*(Continued from page 1)*

since 2008. With me today for support are my daughter Alison and my sons Peter and David.

In my almost 34 years as a Foreign Service Officer, I have served in both developed and developing countries, in countries with liberal democracies as well as in one of the most repressive dictatorships. Almost half of my career has been spent in Africa or working on African affairs in Washington. Early in my career I served as desk officer for Sudan and Uganda and as back up desk officer for Ethiopia where I first came to appreciate the country's rich and longstanding cultural heritage.

The United States has complex interests in Ethiopia, a country that occupies a strategic position in the turbulent Horn of Africa, and its

cooperation has been and will be critical to countering threats to the United States that emanate from that region. At the same time, limitations on political expression and economic activities, as well as shortcomings in respect for basic human rights, run counter to American principles and risk becoming the seeds of future instability. We need to try to work with Ethiopia across the board, preserving the cooperation where we share interests, such as in security cooperation and regional security, while enhancing a productive engagement on other issues that are critical for U.S. interests in the long term - food security, broad-based economic growth that is increasingly private sector driven, gender equality, good governance and respect for basic human rights.

If confirmed, I will bring my experi-

ence, commitment and energy to advancing a balanced and productive U.S. agenda in Ethiopia. I will, of course, adhere to policy guidance from the President and Secretary Clinton. I will ensure they are as fully informed as possible by accurate reporting by the entire U.S. mission in Ethiopia. This is the approach I have pursued as chief of mission in Liberia and Zambia. I also commit to reflect American values to both the government and people of Ethiopia. President Obama said in Accra, "America will not seek to impose any system of government on any other nation." At the same time, he observed that, "Governments that respect the will of their own people ... are more stable and more successful than governments that do not." I believe America's diplomats have a duty to promote respect for basic human rights and freedoms. ♦

## Remarks of Under Secretary of State María Otero . . .

*(Continued from page 1)*

such distinguished women. Since the first time I came to Africa—many, many years ago—I have been struck by the power of strong, courageous women across this continent. From Ghana to South Africa to Botswana to Ethiopia and many countries in between, it has been my privilege to meet and work with African women on the great challenges of this region.

Today, I want to thank each and every one of you for your leadership and personal dedication in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The United States is proud to be partnering with the women and men of Africa to support this effort.

In 2003, we launched the U.S.

President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). It is the largest commitment by any nation to combat a single disease in history. Under PEPFAR, the United States has already committed approximately \$25 billion to the fight against global HIV/AIDS. And President Barack Obama reaffirmed our strong commitment to this work in his recent State of the Union address.

When PEPFAR was announced seven years ago, approximately 50,000 people in sub-Saharan Africa were receiving antiretroviral treatment. Today, PEPFAR directly supports life-saving treatment for more than 2.4 million people worldwide, the vast majority of whom are in in sub-Saharan Africa. Just last year, PEPFAR directly sup-

ported essential care for nearly 11 million people. And we provided testing and counseling—both crucial elements of prevention and rehabilitation—for nearly 29 million people. And we are working to prevent mother-child transmission for hundreds of thousands.

But as you in this room know, this is not just about the numbers. This is about the future of Africa and the women who carry this great continent on their backs. We must continue to walk forward, into the tempest that is HIV/AIDS. And in moving forward, we will make all the more progress if we walk together.

The United States is committed to working closely with all of you—and your governments—to mount a

*(Continued on page 8)*

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## Sudan Tops Foreign Policy Concerns in Obama YouTube Appearance

**By Jeffrey Thomas**  
**Staff Writer**

**Washington** — While President Obama was delivering his first State of the Union address January 27, thousands of Americans went online and submitted their own questions via the popular video Web site YouTube.

People could also vote on the 11,000 questions that were sent in, and on February 1, Obama — who had not seen them in advance — responded to the questions ( <http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2010/February/20100202122641eafas0.5477564.html> ) with the highest approval ratings. His responses streamed live from the White House.

Some of the questions Obama dealt with in the first-ever presidential YouTube interview were addressed in his State of the Union speech as well: health care, jobs, the financial crisis, terrorism and Afghanistan. But the top vote-getter in terms of the percentage who thought it a good question — more than 90 percent — had to do with Sudan, a topic not addressed in his speech.

### **U.S. WORKING FOR LASTING PEACE AGREEMENT IN SUDAN**

Asked what he would do to ensure that widespread violence does not occur in Sudan this year, the president replied, “The situation in Sudan has been heartbreaking but also extremely difficult.”

He said he began working from the day he came into office to ensure that people in refugee camps in

Darfur had access to water, food and other necessities of life and that nongovernmental assistance organizations could return.

“The next step in the challenge is to broker a lasting peace agreement between rebels who are still in the Darfur region and [the Sudanese] government,” Obama explained, noting that his special envoy on Sudan, Scott Gration, was trying to bring together the international community “to get that deal brokered.”

The aim, Obama said, is “a series of agreements that would stabilize the country, and then allow the refugees who are in Darfur to start moving back to their historic lands.”

“Sadly, because of the genocide that took place earlier, a lot of those villages are now destroyed. And so thinking about how to resettle these populations in places that are viable economically, that have the resources to support populations, is a long-term development challenge that the international community is going to have to support.”

The United States continues “to put pressure on the Sudanese government,” Obama said. “If they are not cooperative in these efforts, then it is going to be appropriate for us to conclude that engagement doesn’t work, and we’re going to have to apply additional pressure on Sudan in order to achieve our objectives.”

### **“WE ARE AT WAR AGAINST A VERY SPECIFIC GROUP”**

Asked about his plans for the “war on terror” and the threat of terrorism, Obama began by re-defining

who the enemy is: not an abstraction like “terror” but “a very specific group — al-Qaida and its extremist allies that have metastasized around the globe, that would attack us, attack our allies, attack bases and embassies around the world, and most sadly, attack innocent people regardless of their backgrounds, regardless of their religions.”

“We have to fight them in very concrete ways in Afghanistan and along the border regions of Pakistan where they are still holed up,” Obama said. “They have spread to places like Yemen and Somalia, and we are working internationally with partners to try to limit their scope of operations and dismantle them in those regions.”

“But we also have to battle them with ideas,” Obama continued. “We have to ... work with the overwhelming majority of Muslims who reject senseless violence of this sort, and to work to provide different pathways and different alternatives for people expressing whatever policy differences that they may have. And I think we haven’t done as good of a job on that front.”

Obama also spoke of the need to help countries such as Yemen and Pakistan economically, “to make sure that young people there have opportunity.”

Plans to close the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay have met “a lot of political resistance,” Obama said. “It’s been one of those things that’s been subject to a lot of, in some cases, pretty rank politics.”

Noting that Congress can constrain

*(Continued on page 22)*

## Contact Group on Piracy off Somalia Marks First Anniversary

**Washington** — The United States will join partners from more than 50 countries and international organizations at the United Nations in New York January 28 for a meeting of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, a growing diplomatic effort that is making steady progress against criminals targeting Africa-bound humanitarian aid shipments and other vessels transiting one of the world's busiest shipping corridors, the U.S. Department of State announced January 26.

The meeting, hosted by Norway, will be the fifth gathering of this unique international partnership, established in January 2009 by 24 nations and six international organizations to coordinate an effective international response to piracy in the Somali Basin and surrounding waters following the adoption of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1851.



*Pirates leave the Ukrainian merchant vessel MV Faina for Somalia's shore on October 8, 2008, while under observation by a U.S. Navy ship. The MV Faina, which was carrying a cargo of Ukrainian T-72 tanks and related military equipment, was seized by pirates on September 25 and forced to proceed to anchorage off the Somali coast. A pirate spokesman said the group was willing to negotiate about ransom.*

Since then, the Contact Group has doubled in size, a testament to the global consensus that piracy poses a shared security challenge to maritime safety. Among its accomplishments in its first year, according to the statement, the group lists the following:

Coordinated operations of an unprecedented international naval effort from more than 20 countries working together to escort vessels and patrol the vast waters of the region. The United States stands with NATO and the European Union in these efforts, and also looks to build on new counterpiracy cooperation with countries such as China, India and Russia.

Partnered with the shipping industry to improve practical steps mer-

chant ships can take to avoid, deter or delay pirate attacks and encouraged their adoption through the New York Declaration, a parallel political commitment developed outside the Contact Group by ship registry states to implement these internationally recognized best management practices, which have proven an effective deterrent and leading factor in the declining success rate of pirate attacks.

Developed an International Trust Fund to defray expenses related to prosecuting suspected pirates and other Contact Group initiatives. The United States supports prosecution-related efforts, as well as capacity-building programs to help countries in the region and elsewhere become more self-sufficient in confronting pirate attacks and prosecuting sus-

pected pirates and their enablers.

To learn more about U.S. support for international efforts against piracy, visit [www.state.gov/t/pm/ppa/piracy/index.htm](http://www.state.gov/t/pm/ppa/piracy/index.htm) ( <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/ppa/piracy/index.htm> ).

See America.gov's feature "Combating Piracy ( <http://www.america.gov/piracy.html> )."

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## MCC Chief Executive to Visit Ghana and Cape Verde

**Washington** — The chief executive officer of the U.S. government's Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) travels to MCC beneficiary countries Ghana and Cape Verde January 29–February 5 to evaluate project results.

The trip is Daniel Yohannes' first to MCC partner countries since he was appointed by President Obama in September 2009.

During his visit to Ghana January 30–February 2, Yohannes will tour the N1 Highway, visit the Pakro School, meet with beneficiaries at the Bomart Pineapple Farm, hand out land titles and attend the ribbon-cutting ceremony for a new land title registration office in Winneba. Yohannes will also meet with President John Atta Mills and other senior Ghanaian officials.

In August 2006, the MCC and Ghana signed a five-year, \$547 million compact aimed at reducing poverty by raising farmers' incomes through private-sector and agribusiness development. (A compact is a multi-year agreement between the MCC and an eligible country to fund specific programs targeted at reducing poverty and stimulating economic growth.)

During his visit to Cape Verde February 3–5, Yohannes will visit the



*Daniel Yohannes Chief Executive Officer of the U.S. Government's Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) of Ethiopian origin.*

Port of Praia and the Santiago roads projects. Yohannes will also meet with civil society members and Cape Verdean government officials to discuss guidance in the preparation of a second compact in Cape Verde. The MCC signed its first, five-year compact with Cape Verde in July 2005 for \$110 million; it was aimed at transforming the economy from aid dependence to private-sector growth. Yohannes will end his visit with a meeting with Prime Minister José Maria Neves.

Besides chief executive Yohannes, the MCC delegation includes Jonathan Bloom, acting vice president of compact implementation, James Mazzarella, acting vice president of congressional and public affairs, and Gina Porto, adviser to the CEO.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation is based on the principle that aid is most effective when it reinforces sound political, economic and social policies that promote poverty reduction through economic growth.

For more information, visit [www.mcc.gov](http://www.mcc.gov) ( <http://www.mcc.gov> ). Keep connected with MCC via Facebook ( <http://www.facebook.com/MillenniumChallengeCorp> ) and Twitter ( <http://twitter.com/mcctweets> ), through videos at YouTube ( <http://www.youtube.com/millenniumchallenge> ) and Vimeo ( <http://www.vimeo.com/channels/mcc> ) or by podcast ( <http://www.mcc.gov/itunes> ).

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## Western Nations Urge Nigeria to Exercise Restraint

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

**Washington** — Three Western nations and the European Union urged Nigeria to adhere to its constitutional process in the “current period of uncertainty” caused by the absence of President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua, who has been undergoing medical treatment in Saudi Arabia for the past three months.

“Nigeria is one of the most important countries in sub-Saharan Africa, a member of the U.N. Security Council, a global oil producer, a leader in ECOWAS [the Economic Community of West African States], a major peacekeeping contributing country, and a stabilizing force in West Africa,” the United States, the European Union, Britain and France said in a joint statement ( <http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2010/January/20100128145146xjsnommis0.3369715.html&distid=ucs> ) issued January 28 in London on the sidelines of an international conference on Afghanistan.

“Nigeria’s stability and democracy carry great significance beyond its immediate borders,” the statement said.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, British Foreign Secretary David Miliband, French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner and European Union High Representative Catherine Ashton signed the joint statement.



*People rally on January 12 in Abuja to protest over a power vacuum created by the absence of President Umaru Yar’Adua. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said Tuesday that a “failure” by Nigeria’s government to address young people’s needs was breeding the radicalism seen in the Christmas Day bombing plot.*

“We express our deep regret at the recent violence and tragic loss of lives in Jos, and extend our sympathies to the bereaved and injured. We urge all parties to exercise restraint and seek peaceful means to resolve differences between religious and ethnic groups in Nigeria,” the statement said.

Yar’Adua has been receiving medical treatment for a heart condition in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, since No-

vember 23. Efforts to transfer presidential powers to Vice President Goodluck Jonathan are under way in the Nigerian courts. To date, Yar’Adua has not directed or asked Jonathan to accept temporary control of the nation, nor have the courts ordered a transfer of power, which is provided for in the Nigerian constitution.

Jonathan told reporters on January 28 that the president will return “soon,” but gave no specific date for his return. The Nigerian Senate on January 27 urged that Yar’Adua transfer power to Jonathan in accordance with the constitution.

Yar’Adua’s Cabinet determined that the president has not been incapacitated by his illness and said he was fit to remain in office.

“Nigeria has expressed its resolve to adhere to constitutional processes during this difficult time,” the joint statement said. “We commend that determination to address the current situation through appropriate democratic institutions.”

*(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦*

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## America Must Lead Through Engagement, Obama Says

By Stephen Kaufman  
Staff Writer

**Washington** — There must be continued American leadership to halt the spread of nuclear weapons, develop clean energy and advance human dignity throughout the world, President Obama says, restating his commitment to global engagement.

Speaking January 27 in his first State of the Union address, Obama told U.S. lawmakers, Cabinet members, Supreme Court justices, U.S. military officers and the American people that the United States is leading through engagement to advance “the common security and prosperity of all people.”

U.S. engagement includes taking a leadership role in fighting climate change; working to sustain a lasting global economic recovery; establishing partnerships around the world in science, education and innovation; and providing humanitarian food and medical assistance, including in the fight against HIV/AIDS, he said.

“America takes these actions because our destiny is connected to those beyond our shores. But we also do it because it is right,” Obama said.

In defense of human dignity around the world, “we stand with the girl who yearns to go to school in Afghanistan; ... we support the human rights of the women marching through the streets of Iran; and we advocate for the young man denied a job by corruption in Guinea,” he said.

The president said the threat of nuclear weapons constitutes “perhaps the greatest danger to the American



*In his remarks, which largely focused on the U.S. economy, the president urged more investment in clean energy to create jobs.*

people,” and his administration is pursuing a strategy to reverse their spread and to ultimately seek “a world without them.”

The United States and Russia are expected to resume negotiations on the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) in Geneva February 1. The president described the proposed pact as “the farthest-reaching arms control treaty in nearly two decades.”

The agreement is scheduled to be signed ahead of the Nuclear Security Summit that the president will host in April. Representatives of 44 countries will gather in Washington with the goal of securing “all vulnerable nuclear materials around the world in four years, so that they never fall into the hands of terrorists,” he said.

Nations such as North Korea and Iran that are pursuing nuclear weapons, in turn, are facing stronger economic sanctions and increasing international unity against their efforts, the president said.

The president reiterated that American combat brigades will leave Iraq by the end of August, but the United States will continue to work in partnership and support with the Iraqi government and its people. In Afghanistan, he said, stepped up pressure against the Taliban and increased training of Afghan security forces will allow those forces to take the lead for their country’s security beginning in July 2011 and for American troops to begin returning home.

### THE ECONOMY

Most of the president’s remarks focused on the American economy. Obama said that although the worst of the 2008 recession now has passed, the U.S. unemployment rate is at 10 percent, businesses have shut down and American home values have declined.

For many, “change has not come fast enough,” he said, and job creation will continue to be the top domestic focus in 2010.

One key sector for economic development is clean energy, and the president said that development of that sector, along with reducing pollution and mitigating climate change, will provide new jobs and spur economic growth.

This is “the right thing to do for our future,” Obama said. “The nation that leads the clean energy economy will be the nation that leads the global economy. And America must be that nation.” In addition, the United States needs to increase its exports and aggressively seek new markets.

*(Continued on page 8)*

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## Remarks of Under Secretary of State María Otero . . .

*(Continued from page 2)*

coordinated response to the global burden of this disease.

So, allow me to tell you how: First, we are going to begin transitioning from an emergency response to a sustainable one through greater engagement with and capacity building of governments. PEPFAR has already started this with Partnership Frameworks, which are five-year strategic plans developed in collaboration with our partner governments, including many in Africa.

Second, we are going to focus on prevention. We are going to scale up highly effective prevention interventions like male circumcision and prevention of mother-to-child transmission, and we have set a goal of providing antiretroviral treatment to 4 million people.

And as we talk about expanding our fight against this terrible scourge on Africa, I want to encourage you to open your eyes to another, related challenge. And that is the terrible problem of human trafficking—especially of women and girls. This is when women and men are in situations of forced labor or sexual abuse, without escape or refuge. Trafficking still exists today—around Africa and around the world—and it is a problem that merits the highest levels of attention.

I had the honor of meeting with the Honorable Azeb Mesfin two days ago, and we had a very productive conversation about this challenge. So today I not only want to thank you for the work you are already doing to combat HIV/AIDS, but also encourage you to take on this additional challenge in your own countries, knowing that the United

States is standing ready to support your efforts.

The history of the fight against HIV/AIDS has demonstrated what can happen when we dare to think big. And on behalf of Michelle Obama and Secretary Hillary Clinton, I am here today to say that we are with you. [Applause]

Thank you for your ongoing leadership. You are leading your respective countries as you address key challenges of peace and development. And as Secretary Clinton says, one cannot develop a country without empowering its women first. So I thank you for your work and for allowing me to share this time with you today. Thank you.

(End remarks) ♦

## America Must Lead Through Engagement, Obama Says . . .

*(Continued from page 7)*

"If America sits on the sidelines while other nations sign trade deals, we will lose the chance to create jobs on our shores," he said.

The president said his administration will be working in 2010 to shape the Doha round of World Trade Organization talks in order to increase trade through open markets, and "we will strengthen our trade relations in Asia and with key partners like South Korea, and Panama, and Colombia."

Along with creating jobs and increasing trade, the president called for measures to reduce the U.S. national debt, such as freezing government spending and reforming

health insurance.

Obama said his proposed three-year freeze in government spending would save about \$20 billion in 2011, but would not affect spending in certain areas, including national security, which includes most foreign assistance.

Passage of health insurance reform legislation not only would save lives and improve the security of many Americans, but also would "bring down the deficit by as much as \$1 trillion over the next two decades," he said.

"Don't walk away from reform. Not now. Not when we are so close. Let us find a way to come together and finish the job for the

American people," the president said.

Obama closed by saying that democracy in a nation of 300 million citizens "can be noisy and messy and complicated." But he urged lawmakers to "start anew" after coming through a difficult decade in order to "carry the [American] dream forward, and to strengthen our union once more."

This year, anyone can submit a follow-up question on the president's address and vote on others at YouTube.com/CitizenTube ( <http://www.youtube.com/citizentube#p/c/5D6163EE3E51CB06> ). Next week, the president will answer questions in a special online event, live from the White House.♦



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## Byliner: Vice President Biden on Obama's Nuclear Vision

The President's Nuclear Vision  
We will spend what is necessary to maintain the safety, security and effectiveness of our weapons.

By Joe Biden

The United States faces no greater threat than the spread of nuclear weapons. That is why, last April in Prague, President Obama laid out a comprehensive agenda to reverse their spread, and to pursue the peace and security of a world without them.

He understands that this ultimate goal will not be reached quickly. But by acting on a number of fronts, we can ensure our security, strengthen the global nonproliferation regime, and keep vulnerable nuclear material out of terrorist hands.

For as long as nuclear weapons are required to defend our country and our allies, we will maintain a safe, secure and effective nuclear arsenal. The president's Prague vision is central to this administration's efforts to protect the American people — and that is why we are increasing investments in our nuclear arsenal and infrastructure in this year's budget and beyond.

Among the many challenges our administration inherited was the slow but steady decline in support for our nuclear stockpile and infrastructure, and for our highly trained nuclear work force. The stockpile,

infrastructure and work force played a critical and evolving role in every stage of our nuclear experience, from the Manhattan Project to the present day. Once charged with developing ever more powerful weapons, they have had a new mission in the 18 years since we



*Vice President Biden.*

stopped conducting nuclear tests. That is to maintain the strength of the nuclear arsenal.

For almost a decade, our laboratories and facilities have been underfunded and undervalued. The consequences of this neglect — like the growing shortage of skilled nuclear scientists and engineers and the aging of critical facilities — have largely escaped public notice. Last year, the Strategic Posture Commission led by former Defense Secretaries William Perry and James Schlesinger warned that our nuclear complex requires urgent attention. We agree.

The budget we will submit to Congress on Monday both reverses this decline and enables us to implement the president's nuclear-security agenda. These goals are intertwined. The same skilled nuclear experts who maintain our arsenal play a key role in guaranteeing our

country's security now and for the future. State-of-the art facilities, and highly trained and motivated people, allow us to maintain our arsenal without testing. They will help meet the president's goal of securing vulnerable nuclear materials world-wide in the coming years, and enable us to track and thwart nuclear trafficking, verify weapons reductions, and to develop tomorrow's cutting-edge technologies for our security and prosperity. To achieve these goals, our budget devotes \$7 billion for maintaining our nuclear-weapons stockpile and complex, and for related efforts.

This commitment is \$600 million more than Congress approved last year. And over the next five years we intend to boost funding for these important activities by more than \$5 billion. Even in a time of tough budget decisions, these are investments we must make for our

*(Continued on page 12)*

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## State of the Union Address Deeply Rooted in American History

By Bridget Hunter  
Staff Writer

**Washington** — When President Obama addressed leaders of the U.S. federal government January 27 he was fulfilling a constitutional obligation and following a long-standing tradition of American presidents.

The U.S. Constitution requires that the president report to Congress “from time to time” on the “State of the Union.” This constitutional requirement has evolved into the president’s annual State of the Union address, which now serves several purposes. The speech reports on the condition of the United States both domestically and internationally, recommends a legislative agenda for the coming year and gives the president the opportunity to convey personally his vision for the nation.

In his first State of the Union address, Obama focused heavily on his domestic agenda, but also recapped his administration’s foreign policy goals. How successful he will be in accomplishing his goals will depend in large part on how adroitly Obama can work with Congress and on how effectively he can bridge the partisan divide between Republicans and Democrats, something of which this president is keenly aware.

“Now, I’m not naïve,” Obama said. “I never thought the mere fact of my election would usher in peace, harmony, and some post-partisan era. I knew that both parties have fed divisions that are deeply en-



*Presidents deliver the State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress in the U.S. Capitol.*

trenched. And on some issues, there are simply philosophical differences that will always cause us to part ways. These disagreements, about the role of government in our lives, about our national priorities and our national security, these have been taking place for over 200 years. They are the very essence of our democracy.

“But what frustrates the American people is a Washington where every day is Election Day. We can’t wage a perpetual campaign where the only goal is to see who can get the most embarrassing headlines about their opponent — a belief that if you lose, I win. Neither party should delay or obstruct just because they can.”

Obama promised that he “will not give up on changing the tone of our politics” and, in a message that seemed pointed squarely at Congress, added, “Just saying no to everything may be good short-term politics, but it’s not leadership. We were sent here to serve our citi-

zens, not our ambitions.”

### HISTORY OF THE STATE OF THE UNION

The tradition of the State of the Union address dates back to 1790 when George Washington, the first U.S. president, delivered his “Annual Message” to Congress in New York City, then the provisional capital of the United States. His successor, John Adams, followed suit.

But the nation’s third president, Thomas Jefferson, felt that such elaborate displays were not suitable for the new democratic republic. He delivered a written message rather than appearing in person. Jefferson’s influence was such that for more than a century thereafter presidents delivered written Annual Messages to Congress.

In the early decades of the republic, most of these messages were lists of bills the president wanted the

*(Continued on page 23)*

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## Obama Prepares to Submit U.S. Budget for Fiscal Year 2011

By Bridget Hunter  
Staff Writer

**Washington** — On February 1, President Obama plans to release his blueprint for how the federal government should spend its money in fiscal year 2011, which begins October 1, 2010.

When he sends Congress The Budget of the United States Government, he fulfills a mandate in a 1921 federal law, the Budget and Accounting Act, that requires the president to prepare and submit such a document “no earlier than the first Monday in January, and no later than the first Monday in February.”

The budget will reflect the administration’s spending priorities and likely offer specifics to support some of the goals laid out by Obama in his January 27 State of the Union address ( <http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2010/January/20100127234716SBlebahCO.8334728.html#popup> ), such as a proposed three-year freeze on discretionary government spending, anticipated revenue from proposed new fees on the nation’s biggest banks, and proposed funding for putting more Americans to work rebuilding the country’s infrastructure.

Even though the president’s proposed budget will total trillions of dollars, the figure is a fairly low one relative to the nation’s overall economic output. Annual spending by the U.S. federal government during the past decade has hovered around 16 percent of the nation’s gross domestic product (GDP). Total government spending, including state



*President Obama's proposed federal budget will reflect the policies he laid out in his January 27 State of the Union address.*

and local governments, accounts for about 28 percent of GDP in the United States, a level that is one of the lowest among industrialized nations. In many countries in Western Europe, government spending accounts for half the GDP.

U.S. government spending provides for the public good — services needed by society that benefit all, but which the private sector has little or no incentive to provide. Such services include the national defense, public safety, education and the management of natural resources. Government activities also include issuing currency, collecting taxes, borrowing money and maintaining economic order.

The U.S. budget is a valuable financial tool, but it is also a powerful way for the president to communicate to Congress and to the citizens the priorities of his administration.

This process is mirrored at the state level, as governors present budget proposals that highlight their priorities to state legislatures for consideration. In state governments, the entire funding process sometimes is concluded within weeks. At the federal level, the process stretches out over many months.

### FIRST STEP ON A VERY LONG ROAD

The submission of the president’s budget is the starting point for setting federal spending priorities for the fiscal year that begins October 1. Because the Constitution reserves the authority to raise and spend money for the federal government to Congress — the power of the purse — the president’s budget is simply a recommendation. The actual spending, or appropriations, will be hammered out over several months in a series of actions in Congress and negotiations between Congress and the White House.

The president’s budget process was established in 1921 to increase coordination within the federal government and restrain spending. Previously, individual government agencies had petitioned Congress for funds directly. The shift to a consolidated funding request increased the president’s influence over the budget.

The White House prepares the annual budget after consultation with all federal government entities, soliciting information from the various departments and independent agencies to create a funding request that will support government functions effectively and help implement the president’s policies, both domestic and international.

The Office of Management and Budget, an agency within the executive branch, is in charge of compiling and analyzing budget data for the White House. It generates the actual budget document, traditionally issued as a multivolume set of large, softcover books, and serves

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## Obama Prepares to Submit U.S. Budget for Fiscal Year 2011 . . .

*(Continued from page 11)*

as an advocate for the president's spending policies. President George W. Bush made history in 2008 by releasing his proposed budget for 2009 in electronic formats.

Following the president's submission, Congress gets to work on drafting a dozen separate appropriation bills to fund various categories of spending, such as agriculture,

defense or natural resources. These bills include provisions to fund federal government activities and also allocate money to run programs at the state and local level. Appropriation bills can spark fierce debates between Democrats and Republicans, and between senators and representatives. The spending measures most energetically promoted by a member of Congress generally are tied closely to regional, demographic or economic

factors in his or her home state.

Additional information on the president's proposed budget for fiscal year 2010 will be made available on the White House Web site.

*(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦*

## Byliner: Vice President Biden on Obama's Nuclear Vision . . .

*(Continued from page 9)*

security. We are committed to working with Congress to ensure these budget increases are approved.

This investment is long overdue. It will strengthen our ability to recruit, train and retain the skilled people we need to maintain our nuclear capabilities. It will support the work of our nuclear labs, a national treasure that we must and will sustain. Many of our facilities date back to World War II, and, given the safety and environmental challenges they present, cannot be sustained much longer. Increased funding now will eventually enable considerable savings on both security and maintenance. It also will allow us to clean up and close down production facilities we no longer need. Our budget request is just one of several closely related and equally important initiatives giving life to the president's Prague agenda. Others include completing the New START agreement with Russia, releasing the Nuclear Posture Review on March 1, holding the Nuclear Security Summit in April, and pursuing ratification and entry into force of the Comprehensive Test

Ban Treaty.

We will by these initiatives seek to strengthen an emerging bipartisan consensus on how best to secure our nation. These steps will strengthen the nonproliferation regime, which is vital to holding nations like North Korea and Iran accountable when they break the rules, and deterring others from trying to do so.

Reflecting this consensus, Sen. John McCain has joined the president in endorsing a world without nuclear weapons — a goal that was articulated by President Ronald Reagan, who in 1984 said these weapons must be "banished from the face of the Earth." This consensus was inspired by four of our most eminent statesmen — Messrs. Henry Kissinger, William Perry, Sam Nunn and George P. Shultz.

Some critics will argue that we should not constrain our nuclear efforts in any way. Others will assert that retaining a robust deterrent is at odds with our nonproliferation agenda. These four leaders last week in these pages argued compellingly that "maintaining high confidence in our nuclear arsenal is

critical as the numbers of these weapons goes down. It is also consistent with and necessary for U.S. leadership in nonproliferation, risk reduction and arms reduction goals."

This shared commitment serves our security. No nation can secure itself by disarming unilaterally, but as long as nuclear weapons exist, all nations remain ever on the brink of destruction. As President Obama said in Prague, "We cannot succeed in this endeavor alone, but we can lead it, we can start it."

*(Mr. Joe Biden is vice president of the United States.)*

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## 2010 Census Spurs Muslim-American Community Groups to Action

By M. Scott Bortot  
Staff Writer

**Washington** — In 1790, 17 U.S. marshals, along with some 200 assistants, rode on horseback throughout America to count the country's citizens. That was then, when the U.S. population was around 4 million.

Today, as the nation's population tops 300 million, the U.S. Census Bureau needs much more assistance from Americans than was the case 220 years ago.

Among the many groups helping the bureau in its 2010 census is the Muslim-American community. By the time millions of census questionnaires are mailed to U.S. households in March, Muslim-American groups already will have laid the groundwork by informing their communities about why participating in the census is important to them and to their country.

One of the ways Muslim-American organizations are getting involved is by volunteering for the 2010 U.S. Census Partner program.

"The goal of the U.S. Census Bureau's partnership program is to combine the strengths of state, local and tribal governments, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, schools, media, businesses and others to ensure an accurate 2010 Census," says a statement on the U.S. Census 2010 Web site. "These governmental and private sector businesses and organizations know their local conditions and circumstances better than the Census Bureau and have the connections in the local community to encourage and mobilize participation in the census."



Islamic Relief USA's strong community ties and organizational experience earned it a visit from Census Bureau officials who asked the organization to help promote the census at the local level. With its wide-reaching grass-roots network, Islamic Relief is educating Muslim Americans on how important it is to be counted in the census.

Islamic Relief USA's director of public affairs, Christina Tobias-Nahi, told America.gov that her organization welcomed the chance to help the Census Bureau in talking with people new to the census idea.

"We were approached to help allay these suspicions by disseminating information about what the census is and how the information is used," Tobias-Nahi said. Islamic Relief has sent information about the census through its e-mail lists, blogged about it on its Web site and allowed U.S. Census Bureau officials to address attendees at some of its fundraisers. "We want to show that data collected in the census will bring services to communities — education, health and other kinds of services."

Throughout March, Islamic Relief USA will volunteer its Alexandria, Virginia, offices for census officials

to use once a week to give questionnaires to people who walk in. In addition, Islamic Relief will volunteer Arabic and Urdu interpreters on these days to help the officials talk with non-English speakers.

It is important that all Americans fill out the questionnaire. Census data are used at the political level to determine the number of seats a state may occupy in the U.S. House of Representatives. At the fiscal level, information taken from the questionnaires is used by the federal government to determine where federal funds are needed most to strengthen communities.

Although the U.S. census does ask contain questions about religion, Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) Communications Director Ibrahim Hooper told America.gov that the census is meaningful for Muslim Americans.

"I think, as with all Americans, that having an accurate count and an analysis of our nation's population is important for a variety of reasons that don't even touch on religion," Hooper said. "Whether it is allocation of resources, education or something else, the same issues that apply to all Americans apply to American Muslims as well."

Like Islamic Relief USA, CAIR has a wide-reaching network throughout the United States that is becoming involved in the census. In Oklahoma, the local CAIR chapter is enthusiastic about its participation in promoting the national census. After attending a recent press conference in Kansas City organized by the U.S. Census Bureau, CAIR Oklahoma Executive Director Razi Hashmi told America.gov his organi-

*(Continued on page 22)*

## Museum Seeks to Document the African-American Experience

By Lauren Monsen  
Staff Writer

**Washington** — In historian Lonnie Bunch's eyes, a seemingly mundane family keepsake tucked away in an attic or basement may be a cultural treasure that helps tell the story of the African-American experience.

Bunch, the founding director of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC), is tasked with building a world-class collection of artifacts in time for the museum's opening in 2015. He wants the museum to tell the story of ordinary people as well as the giants of history. Historical items passed down through families might be suitable for the museum's collection, he says, but even if they remain at home, the artifacts deserve special care that will safeguard them for future generations.

"Every day, items — family photographs, military uniforms, farm tools, decorative items and wedding dresses — are deteriorating and at risk of being lost," he said.

In 2008, the NMAAHC launched the "Save Our African American Treasures" program, which travels to U.S. cities and invites people to bring in their heirlooms for evaluation by a team of experts and conservators. Some items end up being donated to the museum, but the program also teaches proper preservation techniques for family mementos so they can be enjoyed by future generations.

"If we don't act now," Bunch said, "the tangible evidence of a critical component of American history will be lost."



*Lonnie Bunch, director of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC), examines documents offered by Connie Bishop (right), who was one of more than 150 individuals who brought historical items for the "Save Our African American Treasures" project when it traveled to Chicago in 2008. NMAAHC and Chicago Public Library experts evaluated the items.*

More than 150 individuals brought items such as quilts, irons, Bibles and dolls to the first "Treasures" event in Chicago in 2008. One was a rare white Pullman Company porter's hat, part of the uniform worn by African-American train attendants from the late 1800s to the 1960s. Its white color meant that its wearer had tended to prominent travelers (perhaps even presidents) on a private train car. The hat's owner donated it to the NMAAHC, along with another rare find: a pin bearing the image of Madam C.J. Walker (1867–1919), the first African-American female self-made millionaire.

"Treasures" events have also been held in Los Angeles, in Washington and in the South Carolina cities of Charleston and St. Helena Island.

On February 6, in connection with Black History Month — which is celebrated every February — Bunch and other NMAAHC experts will invite residents of Atlanta to bring their heirlooms to the Auburn Avenue Research Library on African-American Culture and History.

### BUILDING A MUSEUM

The NMAAHC, authorized by Congress in 2003, currently has an ( <http://nmaahc.si.edu/> ) online presence but is still awaiting its permanent home on the National Mall in Washington. Ghanaian architect Freelon Adjaye and his firm have been chosen to design the building, and Bunch said he hopes President Obama will be present when the

*(Continued on page 15)*

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## Museum Seeks to Document the African-American Experience . . .

*(Continued from page 14)*

museum breaks ground at the building site in 2012. The museum is on track to meet its projected opening deadline of 2015, according to the NMAAHC.

The museum's inaugural exhibition in 2007, *Let Your Motto Be Resistance: African American Portraits*, included 100 striking black-and-white photographs tracing U.S. history from the vantage point of people who have suffered discrimination, oppression and injustice. A traveling version is currently in Atlanta.

Speaking on National Public Radio recently, Bunch admitted that creating a museum "is clearly not for the faint of heart."

The biggest challenge is amassing enough artifacts "to tell a comprehensive story," he said. "One of the things that's important for me is to craft a museum that, on the one hand, is a place that helps you remember the African-American experience, remember the names you think you know — the Martin Luther Kings, the Sojourner Truths — but [also tells] those stories that you don't know: to really understand what it was like to be an enslaved woman or to really understand what it was like for a family to leave Mississippi [and migrate] to the South Side of Chicago in 1917."

One item the museum has acquired is an old railroad car from the "Jim Crow" era of racial segregation, Bunch said. "And it looks like an old standard 1940s railroad car, until you walk in. And the first half of the car was for white passengers. Beautiful seats, amazing bathrooms for 1940 — and then you walk to-

ward the back and there was a little swinging door that said 'Colored.' And when you walked through that door, the back part was much smaller and just had benches."

Walking through that railroad car can help people — especially younger people — "understand what segregation means," he said.

Another important object in the museum's collection is the original casket in which Emmett Till was buried. Till, a 14-year-old African-American boy, was brutally murdered by white men in Mississippi in 1955 after he allegedly whistled at a white woman. Till's mother insisted on an open casket to show the world the brutality of the killing, and the tragedy became a catalyst for the U.S. civil rights movement. Till's casket was donated by family members to the NMAAHC. (His body had been exhumed in 2004 for an autopsy and was reburied in a new casket.)

Race is "still one of the most difficult dialogues we have" in the United States, Bunch told the *Voice of America*. While the election of Barack Obama as the nation's 44th president represents "a profound change, it doesn't mean the issues of race that divided us are now gone." People want the museum to "tell the truth" about the history of slavery and discrimination, he said, and they urge him to "have faith that Americans can handle their difficult history."

Oppression and tragedy cannot be overlooked or minimized, but not everything will have a somber cast. The NMAAHC will explore the many contributions by African Americans to popular culture. It has acquired a trumpet once owned by jazz legend Louis Armstrong, a cape and jump-

suit that belonged to the late soul singer James Brown, and garments from the Black Fashion Museum. Starting in April, the museum will feature a multimedia exhibition ( <http://nmaahc.si.edu/section/programs/view/43> ) on the 75th anniversary of Harlem's Apollo Theater.

See NMAAHC's Web site ( <http://nmaahc.si.edu/> ) for more information about the museum and its *Save Our African American Treasures* ( <http://nmaahc.si.edu/section/programs/view/47> ) program, including tips ( <http://nmaahc.si.edu/section/programs/view/48> ) on preserving books, photos and other cultural artifacts.

The museum is also collaborating with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting on *StoryCorps Griot* ( <http://nmaahc.si.edu/section/programs/view/55> ), an initiative to preserve the oral histories of African-American families. In addition, it has an online *Memory Book* ( [http://nmaahc.si.edu/section/get\\_involved/view/76](http://nmaahc.si.edu/section/get_involved/view/76) ) where people can share photos and stories.

Also see "Growing Number of Museums Preserving Black History, Culture" ( <http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2007/February/20070214153821xlrnnf0.7142298.html> )."

*(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>)* ♦



## Black History Month Honors Legacy of Struggle and Triumph

By Louise Fenner  
Staff Writer

**Washington** — Each February, Black History Month honors the struggles and triumphs of millions of American citizens over the most devastating obstacles — slavery, prejudice, poverty — as well as their contributions to the nation's cultural and political life.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau there are more than 41 million black residents in the United States, including those of more than one race. They make up 13.5 percent of the U.S. population.

In 2009, the inauguration of Barack Obama, America's first African-American president, lent Black History Month a special significance. Obama took the oath of office January 20, the day after Americans honored the memory of Martin Luther King Jr. with a federal holiday and national day of service.

In his inaugural address, Obama acknowledged the historical importance of a moment in which "a man whose father less than 60 years ago might not have been served at a local restaurant can now stand before you to take a most sacred oath."

### HONORING ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF BLACK AMERICANS

Black History Month was the inspiration of Carter G. Woodson (<http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2005/June/20080207153802liameruoy0.1187708.html>), a noted scholar



*A man and his son examine the bus in which Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955 — a landmark moment in America's civil rights movement. The bus is located at the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan, which purchased the vehicle after it was found in a field in Alabama. The bus was unveiled to the public on the first day of Black History Month in 2003.*

and historian, who instituted Negro History Week in 1926. He chose the second week of February to coincide with the birthdays of President Abraham Lincoln and the abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

The celebration was expanded to a month in 1976, the nation's bicentennial. President Gerald R. Ford urged Americans to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history."

Woodson, the son of former slaves in Virginia, realized that the struggles and achievements of Americans of African descent were being ignored or misrepresented. He founded the Association for the Study of African American Life and

History (ASALH), which supports historical research, publishes a scholarly journal and sets the theme for Black History Month each year.

The theme for 2010, "The History of Black Economic Empowerment," recognizes the lives of successful black men and women such as Madame C.J. Walker, founder of a beauty empire in the early 20th century and the first African-American woman to make \$1 million. (See "New Exhibition Celebrates Women Who Challenged and Changed U.S. (<http://www.america.gov/st/arts-english/2008/October/20081009085632EMsutfoL5.527896e-02.html>)")

*(Continued on page 17)*



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## Black History Month Honors Legacy of Struggle and Triumph . . .

*(Continued from page 16)*

This year ASALH is celebrating the centennial of the National Urban League, which was founded in New York City in 1910 by a group of dedicated reformers, both black and white, who wanted to address the needs of African Americans as they migrated northward to escape economic, social and political oppression in the South.

John Fleming, ASALH president from 2007 to 2009 and director emeritus of the Cincinnati Museum Center, said Obama's heritage — a black father born in Kenya and a white mother born in the United States — "continues to reflect the contributions Africans and Europeans have made to American history from the very beginning."

Fleming said he believes Black History Month should focus on positive as well as negative aspects of the black experience. "Certainly, struggle has been an ongoing theme in our history from the very beginning. However, we were not slaves prior to being captured in Africa — and while slavery was part of our experience for 250 years, we have a hundred-and-some years in freedom that we also need to deal with."

He said he has seen "substantial progress on many fronts," but "at the same time there are still major problems that have to be addressed, one being the permanent underclass in urban areas now. We don't seem to be able to break that cycle of poverty. And there are still some major rural pockets of pov-

erty" such as in the Mississippi Delta.

"I'm glad to see the National African American Museum being developed on the Mall, which will tell a much broader story," said Fleming. In 2003, President George W. Bush signed legislation to establish the new museum, which will be located on the National Mall near the Washington Monument. Although the new museum has not yet been built, it launched a photo exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery late in 2007 that is traveling to museums around the country through 2011. (See "African Americans' Struggles, Triumphs Shown in Photo Exhibition" (<http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2007/November/20071127153951GLnesnoM06470301.html>)).

"I think that African-American history gets more attention during February than during any other time of year," Fleming said, "and I think it's an opportunity for us in the field to emphasize that it is something that should be studied throughout the year."

Each year, the U.S. president honors Black History Month, or African-American History Month as it is also called, with a proclamation and a celebration at the White House. States and cities hold their own events around the country, and media feature topics related to black history.

ASALH has its headquarters in Washington, where Woodson lived from 1915 until his death in 1950. His home is designated a national historic site.

Also see People & Places (<http://www.america.gov/amlife/people.html>) on America.gov, "Museum Seeks to Document the African-American Experience" (<http://www.america.gov/st/peopleplace-english/2010/January/20100127150943GLnesnoM9864444e-02.html>), and Census Bureau facts for Black History Month ([http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts\\_for\\_features\\_special\\_editions/014487.html](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/014487.html)) on the Census Bureau Web site

More information on the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (<http://www.asalh.org/>) and the National Urban League (<http://www.nul.org/>) is available on their Web sites.

*(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦*

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## United States Condemns “Unjust” Executions of Iranian Dissenters

By Stephen Kaufman  
Staff Writer

**Washington** — The Obama administration says Iran’s execution of two Iranians who were accused of being involved in protests following the country’s June 12, 2009, presidential election is “unjust” and marks a “low point” in the government’s crackdown against people’s peaceful exercise of their rights to free speech and free assembly.

Speaking to reporters January 28, White House deputy press secretary Bill Burton said the United States “strongly condemns these unjust executions.”

According to press reports, Mohammad Reza Ali Zamani and Arash Rahmanipour were executed by hanging January 28, the first reported executions of political dissidents since the post-election protests began.

“We see it as a low point in the Islamic Republic’s unjust and ruthless crackdown of peaceful dissent,” Burton said. “Murdering political prisoners who are exercising their universal rights will not bring the respect and legitimacy the Islamic Republic seeks. It will only serve to further isolate Iran’s government in the world and from its people.”

The State Department’s assistant secretary for public affairs, P.J. Crowley, said January 28 that it is “unclear that these individuals had anything to do with the turmoil surrounding the elections,” and described the executions as “another

sign of the increasingly ruthless repression and attempts at intimidation” by the Iranian government. Iranian authorities are sending “the wrong signals” to their people, Crowley said. “Iranian citizens have the same right that all citizens have to demonstrate peacefully, to participate in the political process.”

Although the Obama administration remains willing to engage with Iran’s government in hopes that the

4360468.html ) January 28 that “the voices of protest, the voices of opposition, are going to continue to challenge this regime in Iran.”

The Iranian leadership has apparently failed its people as well as “the very principles that they claim to govern by,” Clinton said.

The resolution of Iran’s political crisis remains “an internal societal matter for Iranians to decide.” The

outside world is not involved in the crisis, Clinton said. But the international community is actively concerned over the Iranian government’s nuclear activities and is discussing potential sanctions. Iran has continued to violate its international obligations on the matter, and has not formally responded to an October 2009 offer by China, Russia, France, the United Kingdom, the United States and Germany that would



*The United States strongly condemns Iran’s execution of dissenters Arash Rahmanipour (pictured) and Mohammad Reza Ali Zamani.*

country will play a constructive role in the Middle East, it will also “continue to speak out on Iran regarding their relation with their people and what we see as serious human rights concerns and abuses.”

“We want to see Iran have a different kind of relationship with its own people,” Crowley said.

Speaking in London, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton told Cable News Network ( [allow it to enrich its uranium in another country for use in its Tehran medical research reactor.](http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2010/January/20100129141417xjsnommis0.</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

“Absent a nuclear program, we would still be expressing our regrets and our condemnation of their behavior toward their citizens, but we would not be looking for sanctions. We are looking for sanctions because their nuclear ambitions threaten the rest of the world,” Clinton said.

The United States and other countries are “beginning to share ideas” on the design and enforcement of

*(Continued on page 23)*

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## U.S. Intensifies Efforts to Prevent Human Trafficking in Haiti

**By Jane Morse**  
**Staff Writer**

**Washington** — The State Department announced it is stepping up its efforts to prevent human trafficking — particularly of children — in post-earthquake Haiti.

The magnitude 7.0 earthquake that hit Haiti January 12 — and the strong aftershocks that followed — killed tens of thousands. Many children were separated from their families in the confusion, exposing them to a greater risk of being trafficked by the unscrupulous.

Even before the earthquake, the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons had been working with Haitian authorities to control human trafficking. According to the State Department's most recent Trafficking in Persons Report ( <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2009/123140.htm> ), Haiti is a source, transit and destination country for men, women and children trafficked for the purposes of forced labor and sexual exploitation. The report says several nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working in Haiti noted that in 2008 there had been a sharp increase in the number of Haitian children trafficked for sex and labor to the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas.

Although Haitian officials recognize that human trafficking is a serious problem in their country, Haitian law does not specifically prohibit trafficking in persons, which limits the Haitian government's ability to punish traffickers and protect victims. This is made worse by Haiti's political instability and lack of resources, the State Department re-

port says.

At a January 29 press briefing, Philip Crowley, assistant secretary of state for public affairs, said U.S. officials assisting in the post-earthquake relief efforts have noted a few cases involving pedophiles attempting to adopt Haitian children.

Crowley, in a statement released January 28 ( <http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2010/January/20100129145639eaifas0.8068506.html> ), said that although UNICEF ( <http://www.unicef.org/> ) has taken the lead role in child protection and safety in Haiti since the earthquake, the United States is working to supplement their efforts in combating child trafficking.

Specifically, the State Department — along with UNICEF, the government of Haiti, the Red Cross and other international and nongovernmental organizations — is stepping up efforts to protect vulnerable children by:

- Registering unaccompanied and separated children and working to reunite them with their families.

- Preventing the trafficking of displaced Haitians.

- Educating Haitians about the risks of giving away children in times of crisis.

- Rebuilding the capacity of Haitian NGOs already working to protect child domestic servants, known in Haiti as *restaveks*.

There are some 90,000 to 300,000 *restaveks* in Haiti, according to the State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report. The word *restavek*

comes from the French "*reste avec*" or "one who stays with." It is actually a social system in Haiti where poor, usually rural, families send their children to work as domestics for wealthier families. The child is to receive food, shelter and education in exchange for the labor. Many *restaveks*, however, find themselves in unpaid servitude and physically abused; many are trafficked.

This latest push to help Haiti's most vulnerable victims, Crowley said, "is just the first wave of coordinated efforts in the aftermath of the earthquake which builds on existing efforts and expertise on the ground. We are coordinating further action to be announced in the coming days."

See Haiti: Relief and Recovery ( <http://www.america.gov/world/americas.html> ) and Children Affected by the Earthquake in Haiti ( [http://adoption.state.gov/news/children\\_affected\\_by\\_natural\\_disasters\\_conflict.html](http://adoption.state.gov/news/children_affected_by_natural_disasters_conflict.html) ) for more information.

*(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦*

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## The Struggle for Internet Freedom

**By Jeff Baron**  
**Staff Writer**

**Washington** — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's call for "equal access to knowledge and ideas" online increases attention to a debate already stirring the Arab world and Iran, where censorship is common but varies widely.

"The Middle East and North Africa is one of the most heavily censored regions in the world," said a 2009 report from the OpenNet Initiative ( <http://opennet.net/research/regions/mena> ).

Many governments and their citizens are embracing the use of new technology to expand their economies and to gain access to information never before available. Jordan, for instance, seeks to become a regional leader with an information technology zone in Amman and tax breaks for software companies and business development firms. King Abdullah II has gone online to post a comment on an independent blog.

But governments are also applying restrictive press laws to digital content, "which is not a very good idea" for those trying to build an Internet economy, said Robert Faris, research director for the Berkman Center for Internet and Society ( <http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/> ) at Harvard University.

And Iran, the region's leader in Internet use with a reported 32 million people online ( <http://www.internetworldstats.com/> ), is

"clearly the worst in the region" for Internet censorship, Faris said.

The tools of censorship vary along with its extent. Almost every country in the region filters for some level of content, and many do so extensively. The starting point for



many governments is to block sites that many citizens legitimately find offensive, such as pornography or gambling sites. From there, censorship expands to include political issues: It is not uncommon for political opposition sites to be blocked, for example.

One problem for advocates of open expression is that once a censorship mechanism is in place, it can be used easily and quietly to broaden the reach of censorship beyond that designed to "protect" the community by software engineers who may answer to no one.

A few countries allow relatively open access to Internet Web sites

— yet many of those same governments also arrest bloggers calling for democratic reforms, what Robert Guerra, project director for Freedom House's Global Internet Freedom Initiative ( <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?>

page=383&report=79 ) , called "repression after expression." An April 2009 list from the Committee to Protect Journalists identified the 10 nations most hostile to blogging ( <http://cpj.org/reports/2009/04/10-worst-countries-to-be-a-blogger.php> ); four were Arab countries.

To some extent, the online environment reflects the rules faced by newspapers and other traditional media. The International Federation of Journalists ( <http://www.ifj.org/en/splash> ) has called for an overhaul of media laws, which in many countries allow for the jailing of journalists accused

of undermining the reputation of the state or leaders. "On the plus side of the Internet, there's a lot more freedom in the Arab world online than there is in the mainstream media," Faris said.

A popular Saudi blogger, Eman, said that even with censorship, the Internet is changing her society. "Internet freedom and just having it accessible is especially important in Saudi Arabia," she said in an e-mail interview. "That's because we are an extremely closed and tribal society. Add to that gender segregation, and what you get is a country where the majority of the people are closed off from each other and

*(Continued on page 21)*



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## The Struggle for Internet Freedom . . .

*(Continued from page 20)*

only socialize with same-gender, same-tribe members. So access to Internet forums, local news web-sites and communication across Saudi regions, Islamic sects and tribes is immensely important."

Eman said most Saudis have had limited access to the outside world, which she said Islamic fundamentalists have demonized. With greater use of the Internet — more than a quarter of Saudis are online — "average Saudis are starting to wake up and think for themselves, and this is evident everywhere," Eman said.

As for crackdowns on expression online, Eman said that varies within countries as well as across borders. In Saudi Arabia, "I believe that they are more concerned about bloggers who write in Arabic and try to influence the country internally rather than bloggers who write in English to report to the outside world," she said. "The only blogger that I know of who was jailed and harassed is Fouad al Farhan. ... Al Farhan was jailed for a couple of months but claims he was not tortured. Although this was a few years back, his blog is still blocked."

Another Saudi blogger, Ahmed, said the Internet, though censored, remains the most open form of expression in his country. "Media here is heavily censored, and they do not welcome critical voices," he said in an e-mail. "The Internet has provided a new space for people to speak out and talk freely about the issues they feel strongly about, and this is crucial for a country that is trying to reform itself."

Although the region's governments

commonly defend Internet censorship as an appropriate defense of society's standards, the most severe cases focus on political expression. Guerra and Faris agreed that the most prominent example in the region is that of Iran, especially since last year's disputed presidential election. Other countries have developed extensive, multilayered filtering and censorship apparatuses, according to a 2009 Freedom House study. Governments use these to block opposition political views and discussions of human rights. Offending blogs are deleted, blogs can be blocked, and bloggers and online journalists in some countries have been arrested.

Iranians' struggle over the Internet has been particularly dramatic, as they were already expressing themselves online in large numbers, not only about politics but also poetry and everything else they care about. Millions of expatriate Iranians share information with friends and relatives back home.

After the election, mobile phones and social networks, such as Facebook, were valuable tools for Iranians who wanted to organize or join protests. The government responded by limiting the usefulness of the technology, deliberately cutting the speed of Internet connections and shutting off mobile phone systems, Guerra said. He added that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard has taken control of the country's communications systems and has become more creative and combative in interfering with citizen action.

The government reportedly has been hiring hackers and security experts to interfere with Web sites inside and outside Iran and with e-

mail accounts, deleting content. It is also filtering Web sites far more extensively than before the election, blocking Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, among many others. And social networks are being infiltrated. Numerous reports from Iranians who have returned to the country say that they were required to log onto their Facebook accounts at the airport so that security agents could examine their pages.

"You could say the repression that the Iranian government carried out on the streets ... was carried over onto the Internet," Guerra said.

Iran, like China, also reportedly has used hackers and security experts to interfere with Web sites inside and outside the country. The Internet is where history is being saved, Guerra said — and governments are trying to rewrite it, as Clinton acknowledged in her speech. "As I speak to you today, government censors somewhere are working furiously to erase my words from the records of history," she said.

Activists for Internet freedom have praised the U.S. position put forward by Clinton. Natasha Tynes, program director for Middle Eastern affairs at the International Center for Journalists ( <http://www.icfj.org/> ), said that change ultimately must come from "local players" but that the United States should continue to encourage freedom of expression worldwide and invest in technology and training programs to make a free Internet more accessible to the world.

Guerra said diplomacy can help, along with support for technology that can help people get around the filters and the censors. He said it

*(Continued on page 22)*

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## Sudan Tops Foreign Policy Concerns in Obama YouTube Appearance . . .

*(Continued from page 3)*

his ability to move the prisoners held at Guantánamo by refusing to allocate funds for new facilities, Obama said, "This is something that we've got to work through ... in Congress, but also with public opinion so that people understand that ultimately this is the right thing to do."

On energy, the president repeated his support for solar, wind and other alternative energy sources, but added that those sources could not meet the nation's energy needs. He urged Americans to look at the successful nuclear power programs in Japan and France. "We're mindful of the concerns about storage,

of spent fuel, and concerns about security, but we still think [nuclear energy is] the right thing to do if we're serious about dealing with climate change."

He also called for research into clean-coal technology because countries like China and India are not going to stop using coal and the world will need the technology to deal with its use in an environmentally responsible way.

At the end of the session, Obama expressed enthusiasm for the Internet as a way of hearing from and talking with the public. "This was terrific," he said. "I hope we get a chance to do this on a more regular

basis because it gives me great access to all the people out there with wonderful ideas."

The full text of the interview ( <http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2010/February/20100202122641eaifas0.5477564.html> ) is available on America.gov. The video ( <http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/your-interview-with-president> ) is available on the White House Web site.

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## The Struggle for Internet Freedom . . .

*(Continued from page 21)*

also is important that democracies set good examples by avoiding the temptation to impose even limited forms of censorship of the Internet. He said such action offers other governments an excuse to restrict access to information.

Faris agreed. "We need to be careful not to slip down that road, and

we need to be more careful about not being too Draconian about surveillance and protecting intellectual property online," he said.

"I think ultimately the question is whether we want the government to be the arbiters of what we see on the Internet or whether we want the family to do that," he said. He added that it is a question people in

each country should have the opportunity to answer for themselves.

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## 2010 Census Spurs Muslim-American Community . . .

*(Continued from page 13)*

zation is ready to assist. "We would love to be involved in any way that we can," Hashmi said. "Being a representative of the Muslim community here in the state of Oklahoma, we have that grass-roots connection with mosques across the state, with Muslim communities

across the state, and they definitely look to us regarding these types of opportunities."

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Telling America's story

**United States Condemns "Unjust" Executions . . .**

*(Continued from page 18)*

sanctions that will be "tough and clearly aimed at the Iranian economy," she said, adding that "it is very much our agenda to move forward."

With little evidence that Iran is willing to engage over its nuclear program, the international community "does not have a choice," she said. The United States remains open to pursuing a diplomatic track, but believes it is "imperative to change the calculus" of Iran's leadership, and sanctions are "an appropriate way to proceed," Clinton said.

"The time has come for the international community to say, 'No, we cannot permit your continued pursuit of nuclear weapons. It is destabilizing, it is dangerous, and we're going to take a stand against you,'" she said.

In the meantime, the U.S. Senate passed a bill that would require unilateral U.S. sanctions against Iran because of its continued nuclear activities. The measure, approved January 28, is similar to a bill passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in December. It would restrict Iranian imports of refined petroleum products, broadly ban imports and exports between the United States and Iran with the exception of food and medicine, and require any assets in the United States from groups such as Iran's Revolutionary Guard to be frozen.

The House and Senate must reconcile their versions in a conference committee before a final bill can be submitted to both chambers for approval.

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**State of the Union Address Deeply Rooted in American History. . .**

*(Continued from page 10)*

Congress to enact — reflecting the tenor of the times and the practical problems involved in building the young American nation. The speeches also dealt with the international situation and America's place in the world.

During the crisis that, more than any other, threatened the very existence of the American union — the Civil War — Abraham Lincoln wrote perhaps the most eloquent and memorable of all presidential messages sent to Congress.

"In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free — honorable alike in what we give and what we preserve," wrote Lincoln in 1862.

In 1913, Woodrow Wilson revived the practice of delivering the Annual Message in person. This was a timely decision because the United States was on the eve of a mass media revolution that soon would bring presidents into the homes of Americans, first through radio, then by television.

With the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932, Americans became accustomed to hearing their presidents on radio as well as to seeing and hearing them on the newsreels at the movies.

In 1945, the Annual Message formally became known as the State of the Union address. It also became a television, as well as radio, staple as sales of television sets

skyrocketed in the 1950s. In recognition of the power of television to deliver the president's words to a huge audience, President Lyndon Johnson shifted the time of the address from the traditional mid-day to evening when more viewers could watch.

The tradition of the opposition response began in 1966 when two Republican congressmen, including future President Gerald Ford, delivered a televised Republican response to President Johnson's State of the Union address.

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